DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 177 960 HE 011 818

AUTHOR Millett, John D.
TITLE The States Face Issues of Quality in Higher Education.
PUB DATE 31 Jul 79
NOTE 26p.; Speech presented to the invitational seminar of the Ohio Statewide Coordinating and Governing Boards (July 31, 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Standards; Competence; *Educational Accountability; *Educational Assessment; Educational Objectives; *Educational Quality; *Evaluation Criteria; Government Role; *Higher Education; Institutional Evaluation; Performance Criteria; Standards; State Boards of Education; Teacher Qualifications
IDENTIFIERS Outcomes of Education

ABSTRACT

Three issues of quality in higher education are addressed: defining quality in public higher education, obstacles to the accomplishment of quality, and how to sell the need for quality in public higher education to the government and others. It is suggested that varied standards of student and faculty performance are needed among types of institutions and among programs. Different missions of universities and programs necessarily involve different standards of qualitative evaluation. It is proposed that there is a quantitative dimension to quality. In addition to quantitative standards of institutional size, faculty size, enrollment size, and degree size, institutions need to assess qualifications of the faculty, entering test scores of incoming students, average faculty compensation, the student-faculty ratio, and other parameters. Ideally, the essential indices of quality for any college or university ought not to be inputs but outputs, the outcomes of the educational process, and the outcomes should tell the student learning accomplished, the research performed, the creative expression realized, the public service undertaken, and other values. Two obstacles to achieving quality are (1) a legislative and perhaps a public perception that an avowal of quality is self-serving and (2) the perception among minority groups and especially of blacks that an avowal of quality is simply a new form of racial or ethnic discrimination. To sell the need for quality, it is important to define and make explicit the individual competencies we wish to achieve through higher education. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

John Millett

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

THE STATES FACE ISSUES OF QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Presentation
to the
Invitational Seminar
for Members of
Statewide Coordinating and Governing Boards
by
John D. Millett
Executive Vice President
Academy for Educational Development
Chancellor Emeritus
Ohio Board of Regents
July 31, 1979

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

State boards of higher education and statewide governing boards are going to hear a great deal about quality in the next several years. We have talked about quality in public higher education in the past, but I believe it is fair to say that at the level of state government our necessary preoccupation in the 1960s and 1970s was with quantity rather than quality. Now that the problem of quantity is one of too little rather than too much, state governments will be told that it is time to give renewed attention to the quality of our higher educational endeavors.

Let me pause here to say a word about state government performance in this country in the 1960s. I am tired, as I hope you are, of listening to the Monday morning quarterbacks who decry the expansion of higher educational facilities, programs, and personnel in the years from 1955 to 1975. To listen to some of these persons you would gain the impression that there was a gigantic conspiracy in the 1960s to overbuild higher education just so we could enjoy the disaster of dismantling all of this achievement in the 1980s.

To be sure, the peak year of births in the United States was in 1957. The number of births was almost the same in 1959, and a noticeable decline did not begin until 1962. What our critics fail to acknowledge is the 18 year gap in time between births and traditional entrance into higher education. The babies born in 1957 reached college age in 1975. The babies born in the declining year of 1962 will be of college age in 1980.

The objective of state government planning for higher education in the 1960s was to accomodate the large increase in the youth who wanted to go to college in the years of the 1960s and 1970s. From a degree credit enrollment of 2.7 million students in 1955 American higher education expended to nearly 10 million such students in 1978. Total enrollments last autumn were just under 11.4 million students, down some 60,000 persons from 1977 but still 100,000 more than in 1976.

This four-fold expansion of higher education enrollments between 1955 and 1977 was accomodated primarily by public higher education, which means higher education planned and supported by state governments. Private higher education enrollments increased from 1.2 million students to 2.4 million students, or 100 percent. Public higher education enrollments increased from 1.5 million students to 9 million students, an increase of six times or 500 percent.

I would maintain with all the emphasis I can command that public higher education in the 1960s and the 1970s provided a place somewhere for every single student who wanted to enroll. No one was turned away because there was no place for him or her to enroll. This achievement was a major accomplishment of state governments in the United States for which they deserve the highest praise, not cheap criticism.

Our brethren in private higher education have stated on occasion that the modest expansion of their enrollments during the 1960s reflected their commitment to quality in the conduct of their instruction and other programs. The modest expansion, I might add, reflected also their limited response to social expectations, and their limited financial resources. I learned a long time ago that there is no single standard of educational quality among private colleges and universities, but rather that there is a variety of standards. I also learned that private higher education can and does set innovative standards and quality standards which have been important to the history of public higher education in our country.

To some extent the renewed interest in enrolling in private colleges and universities today suggests that for many families and for many students there is a sense of better quality in private higher education. Our more selective private colleges and universities have experienced an increase in inquiries and in admission applications both in 1978 and in 1979. The explanation for this upsurge appears to be a concern with the qualitative standards of public colleges and universities. Because private higher education expanded more slowly and less extensively than public higher education, it is assumed in some families that private higher education is superior to public higher education. The image of poor performance in some public elementary and secondary schools has carried over and tarnished the image of public higher education.

In this discussion I wish to concentrate attention upon three aspects of quality in public higher education. The whole subject of

quality is so vast, and so troublesome, that I can do no more than simply emphasize certain general considerations. Indeed, my comments and observations are a kind of introduction to what is at best a complex and baffling concern.

The three aspects of quality which I wish to outline here are:

1. How shall we define quality in public higher education?
2. What are the obstacles to the accomplishment of quality in public higher education?
3. How shall we "sell" the need for quality in public higher education to our friends in government, as well as to others?

How Shall We Define Quality?

When I am in one of my fractious moods, I am disposed to define quality in higher education as high faculty salaries, modest teaching loads, a low ratio of students to faculty members, a large library, and students capable of their own self-education. Such a definition is an obvious caricature. The fact remains that quality is an elusive characteristic of higher education subject to various interpretations.

The current practice of regional accrediting associations in reviewing and approving the quality of various colleges and universities seems to me to set the proper framework. Accrediting associations declare that their objective in providing a pragmatic definition of quality is to determine how well the mission of a particular college or university is performed. This definition then recognizes that missions can be different, and that performance will be different in accordance with differences in mission.

The difficulty in evaluating performance in relation to mission is that the mission of a college or university is so often defined in such general terms as to provide only a very limited sense of intended purpose. We in public higher education suffer from a considerable dichotomy. On the one hand we accept the proposition of different purposes and then on the other hand we find a contrast of differences as invidious. Our colleges and universities want to be different one from the other but they all want to be described as the same.

I happen to believe that the missions of public colleges and universities should be different one from another, that the different missions should be clearly defined or as clearly defined as possible, and that different missions necessarily involve different standards of qualitative evaluation.

Some universities have an extensive research and public service mission. Some institutions offer two-year programs; others offer baccalaureate and master's degree programs. Some institutions offer programs in the arts and sciences and a few professional fields; others offer an extensive array of professional programs. Some institutions have an urban orientation; others have a regional or even national orientation. Some institutions have open admissions; others practice selective admission. Some institutions have a limited enrollment size; others seek to accomodate all who present themselves as students. Some institutions enroll predominantly a full-time and residential student body; others enroll predominantly a part-time and commuting student body. Some institutions enroll a predominantly white student body; others enroll a predominantly black student body.

Some institutions demand exacting standards of student performance; others establish less exacting standards. Some institutions have more financial resources than other institutions.

I for one see nothing wrong in these differences. In fact, I think these differences are to be commended, and to be preserved. Let me extend somewhat my comments about diversity. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education in its study of colleges and universities found it necessary to develop a particular classification structure in order to stress the variety of types of institutions. In 1976 the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education issued a revised edition of this classification.

In general, the Commission divided types of institutions into five major categories: doctorate granting institutions, comprehensive universities and colleges, liberal arts colleges, two-year institutions, and specialized institutions. Distinctions among these types were based primarily upon program offerings, but within the principal categories differences in federal government research support, in enrollment size, and in student selectivity were also recognized. And of course a distinction had to be made between public and private institutions.

Within the category of doctorate-granting institutions there were four sub-groupings in the Carnegie classification: research universities I, research universities II, doctorate-granting universities I, and doctorate-granting universities II.

Research universities I were the 50 leading universities in terms of federal financial support of academic science which also awarded at least 50 Ph.D. degrees a year. There were 29 public universities in this category, including the University of Arizona, the University of

california-Berkeley, the University of California-Los Angeles, Colorado State University, the University of Colorado at Boulder, the University of Florida, the University of Georgia, the University of Illinois-Urbana, Purdue, the University of Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Michigan State, the University of Missouri-Columbia, North Carolina State, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Ohio State, Oregon State, Pennsylvania State, the University of Pittsburgh, Texas A and M, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Utah, the University of Washington, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Research universities II were the next 50 leading universities in terms of federal financial support for academic science which awarded 50 or more Ph.D degrees and M.D. degrees. There were 33 public universities in this category, including Auburn, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida State, Georgia Institute of Technology, Indiana at Bloomington, Iowa State, Kansas State, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana State, Massachusetts at Amherst, Wayne State, Mississippi State, Nebraska at Lincoln, Rutgers, New Mexico, City University of New York Graduate Center, State University of New York at Buffalo, State University of New York at Stony Brook, Cincinnati, Oklahoma State, Oklahoma, Oregon, Temple, Tennessee at Knoxville, Utah State, Vermont, Virginia, Virginia Polytechnic, Washington State, and West Virginia University.

Doctorate-granting universities I were institutions awarding 40 or more Ph.D. degrees in at least five fields or which received at least 3 million dollars in federal government support and awarded 20 Ph.D. degrees a year. There were 38 public universities in this category including Alabama, Arizona State, Northern Colorado, Delaware,

Georgia State, Idaho, Northern Illinois, Southern Illinois, Ball State, Louisville, Maine at Orono, Mississippi, Southern Mississippi, Missouri at Kansas City, Montana, Montana State, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Kent State, Ohio University, Toledo, Rhode Island, Clemson, South Carolina, North Texas State, Texas Technological University, the University of Houston, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Wyoming.

Doctorate-granting universities II awarded at lease 20 Ph.D. degrees a year. There were 19 public universities in this category, including Alaska at Fairbanks, the University of South Florida, Idaho State, Illinois State, Indiana State, Western Michigan, Nevada at Reno, North Dakota State, Bowling Green State University, Miami University, Akron, South Dakota State, Memphis State, and the College of William and Mary.

Altogether, out of a total of 184 doctorate-granting institutions, 65 were private and 119 were public. The major criterion employed was the number of doctoral degrees awarded, with a measure of quality added in terms of the dollar volume of federal government academic science support. Since federal research grants are based in large part upon a system of peer review, federal research funds do provide an indication of a qualitative assessment of research competencies at particular public universities.

The revised Carnegie Council classification of 1976 listed 354 public comprehensive universities and colleges. Some 250 were classified as comprehensive universities I, which had programs in arts and sciences and several professional fields such as business administration and

engineering and teacher education and which had at least 2,000 student enrollment. Another 104 state universities were classified as comprehensive universities II, with programs in arts and sciences and at least one professional field and which had enrollments over 1,000 students. Indeed, as I have examined this list, I found 44 public universities with from 1,000 to 2,000 enrollment, 23 with enrollments from 2,000 to 3,000 students, and 37 with enrollment above 3,000 students. In the instance of these larger enrollments, the decisive criterion of classification apparently was that of number of program offerings. These institutions had only two program offerings; usually, these offerings were arts and sciences and teacher education.

The Carnegie Classification listed only 11 public liberal arts colleges, 909 two-year public institutions, and 70 specialized institutions of which 32 were medical centers, one was a separate college of optometry, 8 were separate colleges of engineering, one was a separate college of business and management, 5 were separate schools of fine arts, one was a college of law, 3 were separate colleges of education, and 19 were other specialized institutions.

I cite all these statistic not only to indicate a variety in the types of public institutions of higher education set up and supported by our state governments but also to suggest some differentiation in qualitative considerations. I happen to believe that there is a quantitative dimension to quality. I think it is possible for a college or university to be too small to be good, for a department to have too few faculty members to be good, for a program (meaning a major field

of concentration in a degree program) to have too small an enrollment to be good. No doubt it is also possible for a college or university to be too large to be good.

Just where one draws the line in terms of the quantitative dimensions of quality is a subject of some dispute among faculty members and administrators. I can give you my numbers but I can also assure you that my numbers will be unacceptable to many academic individuals.

The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education set up minimum and maximum enrollments for "effective size" in terms of full-time student equivalents. These numbers as presented in the final report of 1973 were as follows:

	Minimum Size	Maximum Size
Doctoral-Granting Institutions	5,000	20,000
Comprehensive Universities	5,000	10,000
Community Colleges	2,000	5,000

I am not disposed to quarrel with these minimums, but I think the maximums are too inflexible. In any event, I think governing boards and statewide planning boards need to worry more about the minimums than about the maximums. But before we talk about closing any public institutions as too small for effective operation we ought to explore administrative federation as a solution to achieving minimum size.

Insofar as faculty size for offering a major concentration at the baccalaureate level is concerned, I think a department needs a minimum of four full-time equivalent faculty positions. For a combination of an offering of bachelor's and master's degrees, I think the minimum departmental size should be six faculty positions. And if a department

is going to offer bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, I think the minimum faculty size is ten faculty positions. And I would be prepared to argue that my minimums are likely to be too small rather than too large.

In a recent report to one state government board of higher education I undertook to suggest some minimum standards for majors and for annual degrees awarded. These standards were as follows:

	Number of Current Majors	Number of Annual Degrees awarded
Associate Programs	20	10
Baccalaureate Programs	40	10
Master's Programs	15	5
Doctoral Programs	20	2
First Professional Programs	100	20

Here again I would be inclined to argue that my minimums are likely to be too small rather than too large. I offer all of these quantitative standards as guidelines rather than as immutable requirements. I would insist only that instructional program planners and managers be invited to provide their own minimum dimensions of the quantitative factors in achieving academic quality, that instructional planners and managers be asked to justify their minimum standards, and that instructional planners and managers be expected to abide by these minimum standards.

But the task of defining quality cannot end with the establishment of these quantitative standards of institutional size, faculty size, enrollment size, and degree size. Colleges and universities, public and private, have long been inclined to assess quality in terms of

input: qualifications of the faculty, entering test scores of incoming students, average faculty compensation, the student-faculty ratio, the faculty instructional load, the number of books in the library, the net square feet of classroom space per student, the size of the endowment, and the size of the annual budget. It has been generally assumed that the larger the proportion of the faculty with Ph.D. degrees, the larger the proportion of full-time faculty members, the higher the faculty compensation, the lower the student/faculty ratio, the lower the faculty instructional load, the larger the number of books in the library, the higher the test scores of incoming students--then the higher was the quality of the institution. And in fact there has been just enough correlation between these input factors and the general reputation of a college or university to encourage the continuing use of these measures of quality.

The essential indices of quality for any college or university ought not to be inputs but outputs, the outcomes of the educational process. And the outcomes should tell us the student learning accomplished, the research performed, the creative expression realized, the public service undertaken, the educational justice promoted, and the constructive criticism of social performance voiced. Unfortunately, these intended outcomes of the educational process are subject to very imprecise measurement.

In terms of student learning accomplished we gather together information about student course units completed, grade point averages, degrees awarded, and somtimes job placements made. In terms of research performed we gather together information about research

grants received and books and articles published. In terms of creative expression realized, we gather together information about writings published, paintings exhibited, concerts and recitals performed, drama staged, buildings designed. In terms of public service undertaken we gather together information about patients treated in clinics and hospitals, requests for information and assistance received and answered, the number of visitors to museums and galleries, the hours of broadcast offered, the persons reached through workshops and demonstrations. In terms of educational justice promoted we gather together information about student financial assistance awards, student employment, women athletic programs, discrimination avoided, affirmative action undertaken. And in terms of constructive criticism protected we reaffirm our commitment to academic freedom and play down the embarrassments of academic behavior which arouse substantial opposition or which compromise freedom.

And of course we brag about our distinguished alumni and try to suggest that the higher education they received had something to do with the distinction achieved. Who as an academic administrator or a governing board trustee has not participated in many hours of speech and ceremony providing awards for prominent alumni? The words and the recognition are not wasted. Alumni are our principal output. All of us wish we were more certain that our institution did in fact contribute substantially to what alumni do, to what alumni become as humane and sensitive beings, to what alumni contribute to the well-being of their fellow citizens.

I would like to emphasize that in a public system of higher education there ought to be a place for a leading research university, for a comprehensive residential university of selective admission, for a comprehensive residential university of open admission, for a comprehensive urban university of selective admission and of community college transfers, and an urban community and technical college of open admissions. And all of these different institutional missions can have their particular indices of excellence in student learning accomplished, and in other parts of the avowed outcomes colleges and universities exist to achieve.

Indeed, I think it may be said that in purely qualitative terms the institution of open admissions may accomplish more in student learning achieved by its degree recipients than our most selective institutions. If we only knew how to determine the learning added to an individual by a particular instructional program, we would know more than we currently do about learning accomplished, about the value added through the learning process. Just as there is much we don't know about solar energy, about nuclear safety, about aviation safety, about price inflation, and about full employment, so there is much we don't know about educational outcomes. We can't stop technology or transportation or the economy until we learn more. And we can't stop education until we know all the answers to what we do and why we do it.

I have remarked on occasion that I don't know how to define pornography but I know it when I see it. I can't define quality in higher education but I know I sense it when I am in the presence of the

commitment to and the realization of quality. Like the woman colleague Robert Pirsig writes about in that remarkable book entitled Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, I can only exhort all my educational colleagues -- faculty members, administrators, and trustees -- "to teach quality!"

The Obstacles to Quality

I would mention two obstacles to our professions of quality as an objective in public higher education. These obstacles are quite different one from the other but each is nonetheless worrisome in its own right. One of these obstacles is a legislative and perhaps a public perception that an avowal of quality is self-serving. The other of these two obstacles is the perception among minority groups and especially of blacks that an avowal of quality is simply a new and more sophisticated form of racial or ethnic discrimination. Academic planners, academic managers, and governing board members need to be alert to these two concerns.

In its final report of 1973 the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education states (p. 31):

> Higher quality in teaching, in curricular offerings, in campus environments, in research and service; and greater diversity among and within, and greater effectiveness of institutions are clearly possible and highly desirable. The "tidal wave" of students of the 1960s was handled with great success; the new imperative is a more modest wave of interest in quality, in intensive rather than extensive growth -- albeit that the former is more difficult than the latter to achieve and can never be doubled, as were enrollments, in the course of a single decade.

For many persons, and especially for budget analysts in the office of state governors and for appropriation analysts on the staff of state legislatures, statements such as the one I have just quoted will be greeted with some suspicion. The declaration of quality as an objective will be viewed as an excuse to avoid appropriation reductions as enrollments decline. Our skeptical budget friends are going to be doubly skeptical about our protestations of quality objectives.

You see, for many years, all during the 1960s and 1970s, we who served as academic administrators and leaders asserted that quality cost money. And indeed quality did cost money. If a leading research university wished to preserve and advance its reputation and its performance in research, it had to offer ever increasing salaries to the handful of productive and imaginative research scholars available in this country. If a doctorate-granting university wished to build a graduate faculty of some distinction, it had to recruit persons with experience in graduate education, and such persons were in short supply until the 1970s. Expanded program offerings required new equipment, additional library and learning resources, and more faculty members.

Moreover, many of our budget requests in the 1960s and 1970s were presented in terms of additional funds needed for qualitative improvements. These qualitative improvements frequently were stated in terms of a reduction in the student/faculty ratio and an expansion of faculty time devoted to non-instructional outputs. This operational definition of quality did on occasion serve us well and did succeed in obtaining additonal income.

But we also succeeded in equating quality with increased costs. Now when we begin to talk about a new concern with quality in our public colleges and universities, we shall immediately be confronted with a governmental suspicion that we are simply seeking to maintain and advance our costs.

Let me mention yet another cost complication. Years ago in a private conversation a Nobel-Prize winning American faculty member declared to me that great researchers in the biological and physical sciences made their principal contributions to knowledge before they reached 45 years of age. That statement made 30 years ago is now a part of the conventional wisdom of American academic science. Today a major fear of our leading research universities and of our research supporting agencies such as the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health is that we shall lose a generation or more of academic researchers, and so lose a period of research achievements, because of the lack of faculty vacancies for young academic scientists. Indeed, a study of this situation and of methods for meeting it is currently going forward within the National Science Foundation.

Suppose we assume that the young scientist is the productive research scientist. Suppose we assume that academic science is best performed within the academic environment. If these assumptions have some validity, and I suspect they do, then it follows that our leading research universities had better have the resources to employ and to encourage young research scientists regardless of enrollment declines. We may have to draw new distinctions between research

science and student instruction in our leading research universities. We know that federal government research grants never meet the full costs of research projects. In the name of research quality we shall have to enlarge state government support of our leading public research universities.

In some particulars, as in research support, there will continue to be a direct relationship between costs and quality. But in other particulars, as in student instruction, quality advancement will not be so much a function of expenditure as it will be a function of faculty management and of academic leadership. We shall need a faculty commitment to improved standards of student performance and a faculty willingness to evaluate faculty performance in qualitative terms. And we shall no longer be able to afford to ignore poor qualitative performance on the part of individual faculty members.

I would present this warning. If we think of quality as a reason for increased funding, we in public higher education will make very little progress toward that objective in the 1980s. To equate quality with larger state appropriations will be an obstacle to the achievement of qualitative improvements in public higher education.

The other obstacle is one of public perception, especially of minority perception, about the objective of higher education quality. There is always in American society a certain tension between quality and equality. Years ago John W. Gardner put this question as a subtitle to a very good book: "Can We Be Equal and Excellent Too?"

In the intervening twenty years the question has not gone away. The dilemma is as real today as ever before: Can we Be Equal and Excellent Too?

The late British economist E. F. Schumacher attracted a good deal of attention with his little book entitled Small is Beautiful. Personally, I have some strong reservations about the proposition that a smaller gross national product in this country will be a beautiful gross national product. My guess is that a smaller gross national product will be ugly. A smaller gross national product will confront us in an ugly fashion with an age-old political and economic question: how shall we divide up among individuals and families the reduced income.

The fact is that currently talent, achievement, luck, and income are distributed unevenly among Americans. Some but not all individuals have talent as professional athletes, professional musicians, professional managers, professional practitioners, and professional scholars. Some but not all of us achieve academic degrees, prizes, awards, election to particular societies, and positions of social prestige. Some but not all of us have the good fortune to own valuable land, to make shrewd investments, to invent a better mousetrap, to be in the right job at the right time at the right place. Some but only half of us have family incomes above the median of $17,000 a year; only 22 percent of our families have incomes above $25,000 a year.

In the 1960s and 1970s the United States as a society became morally concerned with poverty as perhaps never before in our history.

The political response to this concern has been twofold: income maintenance and education. The President's budget recommendations for the fiscal year 1979-80 come to a total of 532 billion dollars. Some 40 percent of that total involves transfer payments to maintain the income security of families and individuals: social security benefits, retirement benefits, unemployment compensation, public assistance, and miscellaneous programs such as housing subsidies, food stamps, and school lunches.

Beyond income maintenance, education has become the popular mechanism for enabling individuals to escape from the poverty class in America and to advance in economic status. And in fact the kinds of jobs which expanded in the 1960s and 1970s were jobs open only to persons with a college education, or jobs where a college education was an advantageous preparation. Since black families were to be found in greater numbers in the poverty class than white families, in large part because of their displacement from agriculture in the South, black leadership has been adamant in seeking to increase black participation in higher education.

We in public higher education will need to be sure that our increased attention to quality does not involve racial imbalance in enrollments, or racial imbalance in learning outcomes. A black population of rural background and past discrimination many require more than one generation of urban and educational experience in order to compete successfully in technical, professional, and managerial employment with the top levels of white achievement.

And coming behind the black population of America is the great wave of Hispanic population which has entered the United States in recent years. The exact magnitude of this migration is apparently unknown, although I have heard estimates that there may be as many Hispanic people entering the United States today as there are annual births today. When the second generation of Hispanic persons become natural born citizens of our nation, our educational structure -- elementary, secondary, and higher -- will face new challenges.

Whether we like it or not, higher education is regarded as a mechanism of social and economic mobility as well as a means to educational attainment. If public higher education adopts and practices a standard of quality perceived popularly as an impediment to social mobility, then that popular perception will become a major obstacle to quality. We will all do well to remember this fact.

How Do We Sell the Need for Quality?

In the third place, we in public higher education will have to give careful thought to how we justify the need for improved quality. I have said already that we need varied standards of student and faculty performance among types of institutions and among programs. I have said that we shall need to be alert to the obstacles which might stand in the way of a concern with qualitative improvements. But we shall need to be prepared to make a strong case for any pronouncements we may make about improved quality.

I am inclined to say that the most exacting standards of student and faculty performance in American higher education are observed in medical education. A revolutionary change in medical education took place after the justly famous Flexner report of 1910. The thesis was simple: medical education should be based in medical knowledge, medical knowledge would best be transmitted and advanced in a university environment, and medical education of quality would produce medical care of quality.

Being a culture of hypochondriacs as we are, we have been willing to accept the Flexner thesis. And the consequences have generally been regarded as socially useful, although we still don't know how to deliver quality medical care to all persons at a cost we are willing to pay and are able to pay. American medical eduction is probably the best medical education in the world. American medical education is certainly the most expensive education in the world, and in this country. We have justified the cost in terms of quality, and in terms of the benefits to be derived by everyone of us as individuals from quality medical care.

The need for quality in American higher education arises from two basic considerations. The first consideration is that of technical and professional competence in serving others. The other consideration is that of general intellectuals competence for individuals as functioning, humane, literate, and social beings. Technical and professional incompetence can damage everyone in society. General intellectual incompetence

can damage the moral, political, and economic leadership of our pluralistic society and our liberal democracy.

I hold that we can sell the need for quality only as we define and make explicit the individual competencies we wish to achieve through higher education. The whole concept of quality is an abstraction until it is translated into the operational reality of individual competencies which can be realized through higher education. If we seek quality in higher education, we must determine the competencies essential in particular programs of higher education. We must demonstrate the social benefits, indeed the social necessity, of such competencies. And we must provide evidence that these competencies do make a difrerence in the lives of all who live and function in our society.

It is sometimes overlooked that the benefits of higher education are not primarily individual but social. Too often we talk about the income return to an individual from the investment in higher education. We tend to accede to the proposition that the purpose of higher education is to enable an individual to obtain and retain a higher paying job. We forget that compensation in our economy reflects the perceived value of the services performed by the individual, services performed which in some way add to our health, our material well-being, our entertainment, our education.

The purpose of higher education is not individual economic betterment but social betterment for many or all persons. Higher education produces educated individuals who use their education for the benefit of others.

Everyone in society has a stake in the quality of higher education, because the purpose of higher education is to serve society. Educated talent is not an individual adornment. Educated talent is individual competence to be of service to others.

Conclusion

It is appropriate that all of us in higher education should give increased attention to the quality of our educational endeavors: quality in instruction, quality in research, quality in creative expression, quality in public service, quality in educational justice, quality in constructive criticism. We must give this increased attention to quality becuase higher education cannot well serve society in any other way.

At the same time we must be realistic in our commitment to quality. We must recognize our obligation to frame meaningful and varied definitions of quality. We must seek to overcome or respond to the obstacles to quality. We must be prepared to justify the need for quality.

More particularly, members of governing boards and members of statewide higher education boards will need to be alert to the claims about higher education quality presented to them. Generalizations about the desirability of quality will not be sufficient without details. Higher educational leaders must be asked to give specific meaning to their quest for quality. In turn, educational leaders must ask faculty managers -- deans, executive officers of departments, individual

faculty members -- to provide definitions of quality, reasonable procedures to achieve quality, evidence of quality, and demonstration of the social utility of quality.

Members of governing boards and of statewide boards cannot ensure quality in higher education but they can inquire about the presence of quality in higher education. Indeed, asking the right questions may be the surest path not just to the future of quality in higher education but also to the very survival of higher education.

All of us in higher education -- board members, leaders, managers, alumni, friends, and others -- must not fail to teach quality. Quality is our justification for existence. Quality is our eternal quest, our impossible dream.